

Illness, Healing, and Culture
ANTH 3504: Spring 2016
George Washington University

Wednesdays 3:30pm – 6:00pm
Duque Hall, 2201 G St. NW
Room 151

Instructor Information:

Professor: Sarah Raskin, PhD, MPH
seraskin@gwu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00am – 12:30pm and by appointment
2110 G Street (Hortense Amsterdam House) Room 301

Grading Assistant: Beth Moretzky, MA candidate
bmoretzsky@gwu.edu

Course Summary:

This course is an overview of the subfield of medical anthropology, aimed at upper-level undergraduates. Using extended case studies of different diseases and healing modalities from diverse community and clinical contexts, we will critically examine comparative ideas of “illness,” “suffering,” “wellness,” “healing,” and even “culture” itself, as it relates to health and the body. Following an introduction to core concepts and methods, content is divided into four sections, organized around the overarching theme of cross-culturalism: (1) co-morbid disease and the embodiment of structural inequality; (2) negotiating values through a system of care; (3) medical technology: expectations and confrontations; and (4) contextualizing medical pluralism. By participating in class and completing assigned reading and assignments, students will learn to:

- Describe and critically compare diverse perspectives on concepts of “health,” “disease,” “illness,” “healing,” “medicine,” and “culture.”
- Relate medical anthropological perspectives on these concepts to major concepts in public health, clinical medicine, and bioethics, and to illustrate these relationships through at least one concrete example.
- Read, understand, and evaluate a full-length ethnography, including the quality and clarity of writing, adequacy of evidence base, and success of argument.
- Explain what anthropological perspectives and ethnographic research offer public discussions, policy debates, clinical practice, and personal experiences regarding health or health care.

Additional learning outcomes include: (1) to refine skills in critical assessment and argumentation through extemporaneous discussion and writing and (2) to practice ethnographic interviewing, analysis, and writing.

A note on taking a course that meets only once per week:

This course condenses a week’s worth of material, in other classes distributed across 2-3 days, into one day. This amounts to approximately one hundred (100) pages of reading per class session.

I urge you to keep up with readings and to avoid missing class if at all possible. If you feel yourself slipping behind, please reach out to me **as soon as possible**, and we will work together to identify a plan to get you back on track. *I will not respond to post-facto requests from anyone falling behind who has more than three absences total or two sequential absences unless they have a note from an official (e.g. Student Health).*

Course Requirements:

(1) Participation in in-class discussions (weekly). Approximately half of each class meeting will be interactive. Please come to each weekly class with prepared questions, notes, or observations about the readings.

(2) Brief unannounced assessments (four)

Four times during our semester, you will participate in brief unannounced assessments. In-class assessments will be timed. Blackboard-based assessments will have to be completed within 48 hours of posting. All assessments will be “open book/open notes.” Assessments will be conceptually cumulative, but will emphasize the topic of the week posted. For example, you may be asked to apply a theoretical concept discussed early in the semester to a topic area (e.g. a health problem) discussed later. Accordingly, it will be to your benefit to always bring your notes, the current/most recent book, and pen and paper to class.

(3) Ethnographic interview assignment

You will be required to conduct one semi-structured ethnographic interview with one person of your choosing about their experience having a health problem, caring for someone who is ill, and/or seeking or providing some aspect of health care (e.g. clinical care, prevention education, health policy). More information on the interview assignment will be provided. This project serves as the culmination of your semester’s work, also called a final paper. The final paper is meant to allow you to explore your own health or healthcare interests *and to encourage you to assess the potential methodological and analytical contributions of anthropology.* The assignment will be conducted and assessed in two parts:

(3a) Draft Interview Guide

You will develop and submit an interview guide containing 8-10 open-ended questions around the health or healthcare topic of your choosing. You will:

Submit this Interview Guide electronically to Professor Raskin and Grading Assistant Beth Moretsky by 3:15pm on Wednesday March 9 AND

Bring a hard copy of this Interview Guide to class on Wednesday March 9.

(3b) Conduct ethnographic interview and write final paper based on interview

You will edit your semi-structured ethnographic Interview Guide in response to Professor/Grader feedback and learnings from your experience piloting the Guide in class. You will conduct one semi-structured interview with one person of your choosing who fits the interest of your interview. You will write a final paper (**7-8 pages in double spaced TNR font/1750-2000 words plus edited Interview Guide and Works Cited in Appendices**), that examines your data within the context of at least two concepts discussed this semester. More information provided in class will address questions including methodological concerns like recording versus note-taking; the maximum word count of direct quotations for your final paper; and required elements of the paper (e.g. 1-page section reflecting on your experience.)

There is no final exam during the final exam period.

Required Texts:

- (1) Electronic readings of journal articles, book chapters, and other .pdf texts on Blackboard
- (2) Joralemon, Donald
2009 Exploring Medical Anthropology, 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson, NJ.
- (3) Mendenhall, Emily
2013 Syndemic Suffering: Social Distress, Depression, and Diabetes among Mexican Immigrant Women. Left Coast Press.
- (4) Kaufman, Sharon
2005 And a Time to Die: How American Hospitals Shape the End of Life. University of Chicago Press.
- (5) Livingston, Julie.

- 2012 Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic. Duke University Press
- (6) Zhan, Mei.
2009 Other-Worldly: Making Chinese Medicine through Transnational Frames. Duke University Press

Grading Equation:

In-class participation:	25%
Unscheduled assessments:	20%
Draft Interview Guide:	15%
Interview-based Final Paper:	40%

Class Policies

Planned Absences: In order to not miss out on any graded assignments (e.g. class participation or unscheduled assessments) I *strongly encourage* you to inform me by 11:59pmET January 20, 2016 if you have any planned trips or absences during the semester. Please provide this information in writing, either in the form of a note or an e-mail to seraskin@gwu.edu

Electronic Device Policy: All electronic devices must be silenced during class. Small electronic devices (e.g. cell phones) should be put away; anyone anticipating an urgent matter that will require them to step away from class *briefly* should place their personal electronic device (e.g. cell phone) on their work space in view of the instructor. Students wishing to use their electronic device to take notes should sit in the first 2-3 rows of the classroom. Students may use an e-reader or tablet to view assigned reading. *Anyone found to be using their electronic device during class meetings for a purpose other than class-related activities (with the exception described above) will be asked to leave immediately, for the remainder of that meeting. S/he will not be permitted to use an electronic device during class for any reason for the remainder of the semester.*

Academic Dishonesty: If you are caught plagiarizing or copying anything from anyone else or any other source, including in your weekly responses, you will automatically fail the course. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>

Learning to cite sources properly is key to avoiding an unintentional or accidental violation of the code of academic integrity. The American Anthropological Association follows the Chicago Manual of Style, which can be found here: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html> You are welcome to use your major discipline's preferred style of citation (e.g. AP, APA, Chicago), as long as you use it consistently.

Support for Students Outside the Classroom: Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the **Disability Support Services** office at (202) 994-8250 in Rome Hall (801 22nd St. NW) Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. If you will need extra time on your assignments, please make sure you contact this office first and we will make all appropriate arrangements. For additional information please refer to: <http://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/> **Mental Health Services** at (202-994-5300) in the Marvin Center (800 21st St. NW) Ground Floor offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations, confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. See <http://counselingcenter.gwu.edu>

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Readings are listed, for each date, in the order that you should read them.

* Readings marked with an asterisk are available on Blackboard.

INTRO: ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO ILLNESS, HEALING, AND “CULTURE”

Wednesday January 13, 2016

In-class reading (handout)

*Evans-Pritchard, E.E

1976. The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events. In: *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*, pp.18-32. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

*Kleinman, Arthur and Peter Benson.

2006. *Anthropology in the Clinic: The Problem of Cultural Competence and How to Fix It*. PLoS Medicine.

In-class film:

Grainger-Monsen, Maren and Julia Haslett.

2003. *Worlds Apart: A Four-Part Series on Cross-Cultural Healthcare*

Major Concepts: Introduction

Wednesday January 20, 2016

Joralemon, Donald

2009. *Exploring Medical Anthropology*, 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson, NJ.
(Whole book. It is well-paced, direct, and extremely readable. Please give it something between a close skim and a full read.)

*Hanna, Bridget and Arthur Kleinman

2013. *Unpacking Global Health: Theory and Critique*. Chapter 2 (p. 15-22) in *Reimagining Global Health: An Introduction*. Farmer, Paul, et al., eds. University of California Press.

* Lock, Margaret and Vinh-Kim Nguyen

2011. *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. Wiley-Blackwell Publishers.
The Normal Body p. 32-54

DUE BY 11:59pmET: Notice of any planned/scheduled absences

Major Concepts: A Closer Look

Wednesday January 27

*Good, Byron J.

1994. *Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief* (modified). Pp. 1-24 in: *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience*. Cambridge University Press.

*Suri, Arjun, Jonathan Weigel, et al.

2013. *Values and Global Health*. Chapter 9 (p. 245-286) in *Reimagining Global Health: An Introduction*. Farmer, Paul, et al., eds. University of California Press.

* Lock, Margaret and Vinh-Kim Nguyen

2011. *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. Wiley-Blackwell Publishers.
Anthropologies of Medicine p. 57-81 and *The Matter of Self* p. 283-301

*Boonmongkon, Pimpawun, Mark Nichter, and Jen Pylypa

2004. *Mot luuk problems in Northeast Thailand: why women's own health concerns matter as much as disease rates*. *Social Science and Medicine* 5:1095-112

Methods Workshop

Wednesday February 3, 2016

Mendenhall, Emily

2013 *Syndemic Suffering: Social Distress, Depression, and Diabetes among Mexican Immigrant Women*. Left Coast Press.
Chapters 2 and 3 (p. 35-80)

*Sobo, Elisa J.

2009 *Culture & Meaning in Health services Research: A Practical Field Guide*. Left Coast Press
Chapters 11 and 12 (Making the Most of One Time Interviews and The Importance of Being There, p. 197-246)

*Mattingly, Cheryl.

1994 The Concept of Therapeutic 'Emplotment.' *Social Science and Medicine* 38:811-22.

*Mulligan, Jessica M.

2014 *Unmanageable Care: An Ethnography of Health Care Privatization in Puerto Rico*. NYU Press. Appendix 1 p. 231-240.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEVELOPING DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE DISTRIBUTED AT END OF CLASS

CO-MORBID DISEASE AND THE EMBODIMENT OF STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY

Wednesday February 10, 2016

Mendenhall, Emily

2013 *Syndemic Suffering: Social Distress, Depression, and Diabetes among Mexican Immigrant Women*. Left Coast Press.
Chapters Introduction, 1, 4, 5, and Conclusion (p. 11-34, 81-114))

<http://somatosphere.net/2015/10/summer-roundup-bioculturalism.html> (Read this post, the linked Introduction by Snodgrass, and linked interviews with William Dressler, Emily Mendenhall, Christopher Lynn, and Greg Downey)

In-class film: Bittersweet (BBC)

NEGOTIATING VALUES THROUGH A SYSTEM OF CARE

Wednesday February 17, 2016

Kaufman, Sharon

2005 *And a Time to Die: How American Hospitals Shape the End of Life*. University of Chicago Press.
Introduction and Part I/Chs. 1,2 (p. 1-84)

Wednesday February 24, 2016

Kaufman, Sharon

2005 *And a Time to Die: How American Hospitals Shape the End of Life*. University of Chicago Press.
Part II/Chapters 3-5 (p. 85-202)

In class film: from Facing Death (Frontline)

Wednesday March 2, 2016

Kaufman, Sharon

2005 *And a Time to Die: How American Hospitals Shape the End of Life*. University of Chicago Press.
Part III/Chapters 6-9 (p. 203-326)

INTERLUDE: INTERVIEW GUIDE PILOT AND WORKSHOP

Wednesday March 9, 2016

Due in class: Draft Interview Guide

No reading due

*****SPRING BREAK – no class on Wednesday March 16, 2016*****

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY: EXPECTATIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS

Wednesday March 23, 2016

Livingston, Julie.

2012 Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic. Duke University Press

Chapters 1-3 (p. 1-84)

In-class film: from “Everything’s Fine”

Wednesday March 30, 2016

Livingston, Julie.

2012 Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic. Duke University Press

Interlude, Chapters 4-6, Epilogue (p. 85-182)

CONTEXTUALIZING MEDICAL PLURALISM

Wednesday April 6, 2016

Zhan, Mei.

2009 Other-Worldly: Making Chinese Medicine through Transnational Frames. Duke University Press

Chapters Introduction plus Chapters 1 and 2 (p. 1-90)

Wednesday April 13, 2016

Zhan, Mei.

2009 Other-Worldly: Making Chinese Medicine through Transnational Frames. Duke University Press

Chapters 3-6 + Epilogue (p. 91-202)

In class film: (from) In Pursuit of the Siberian Shaman

Class Review and Conclusions (last day of class)

Wednesday April 20, 2016

Readings (review) TBD)

FINAL PAPER DUE

Wednesday, May 4, before midnight